

The work of public school teachers and principals has never been more difficult and demanding.

All aspects of the work of teachers have been altered due to constant policy changes, advances in technology, curriculum changes and the increasingly complex needs of students. Teachers also now have growing data collection, administration and compliance responsibilities that they have to fulfill in addition to their primary responsibility of teaching. This administration workload means teachers are required to work far more hours than they are paid for, negatively affecting their work-life balance and effectiveness as teachers.

WORKLOADS ARE UNSUSTAINABLE

The independent inquiry into the work of teachers, chaired by former WA Premier Geoff Gallop, found workloads had reached unsustainable levels in schools. The inquiry said the changes in the work of teachers since 2004 were greater than in any other period, dating back to 1970.

The unsustainable level of workloads was confirmed in a recent survey that found two-thirds of teachers were reconsidering their positions as a teachers due to the workload.

And three-quarters of teachers and principals said they felt stressed frequently or all the time at work.

PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS TALK ABOUT THEIR WORKLOAD

“My executive and classroom teacher administrative burden is double my face to face teaching hours.”

EXECUTIVE TEACHER

“We have been trained in multiple types of data entry and assessment platforms and nothing seems to be given enough time to reap any real result before a new platform is bought in.”

TEACHER

“As a school principal the administration and compliance workload has more than tripled in the past five years.”

PRINCIPAL

“I find my time is consumed by many desk tasks and cannot get out of my office to support staff and students in the daily operations that require my expertise.”

PRINCIPAL

“The amount of paperwork and administration in this role greatly diminishes my capacity to delivery quality services to students.”

SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

“Teaching used to be about teaching and interacting with students 95% of the time. The other 5% was admin. In the last five years that’s changed significantly, almost to the point of 50/50.”

TEACHER

“All aspects of the work of teachers has grown in volume and complexity.”

Valuing the teaching profession — an independent inquiry
February 2021

KEY FACTS

AVERAGE WORKING HOURS A WEEK

- Principals and deputy principals: 62 hours
- Head teachers and assistant principals: 58 hours
- Classroom teacher: 55 hours a week. (*Understanding Work in Schools, Sydney University*)

Two-thirds of teachers say they are reconsidering their future in the profession due to the workload.

(NSWTF survey)

Only one-third of teachers say they have time to do their job well.

(NSW People Matter Employee Survey, 2020)

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

Teachers need more time to focus on what really matters: teaching and learning.

Release time: An additional two hours release time is needed for primary teachers, along with a reduction of two hours in the current maximum face-to-face teaching loads for all secondary teachers (including head teachers and deputy principals). Assistant principals and deputy principals in primary schools must also have the same non face-to-face teaching entitlement as their secondary colleagues. This time needs to be dedicated to lesson planning and collaboration with colleagues on how to best meet the needs of students at the school.

Administration: Administration and compliance workloads for teachers need to be reduced in all settings as a matter of urgency.

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